

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A guidewire exit tool, comprising:
a handle;
a pin secured to the handle and having a diameter that fits within a guidewire channel of a rapid exchange-type catheter; and
a web that secures the pin to the handle, the web being positioned laterally with respect to the long axis of the pin, wherein the pin fits in the guidewire channel and the web fits through a slot of [[a]] the guidewire channel to allow the pin to be moved along the guidewire channel by the handle, wherein the web having a forward facing surface of the web that is substantially blunt to prevent cutting the catheter, and wherein the pin having a forward facing surface that is solid in the center and tapered so that the surface can face in the direction of the slot so that as the forward facing surface engages a guidewire [[and]] the pin lifts an end of the guidewire out of a guidewire channel through the slot.
2. Canceled.
3. (Previously presented) The guidewire exit tool of Claim 1, wherein the web has a thickness that is less than the diameter of the pin.
4. (Original) The guidewire exit tool of Claim 1, wherein the handle is oval in shape.
5. (Original) The guidewire exit tool of Claim 4, wherein the oval handle has an axis that is angled with respect to a longitudinal axis of the pin.

6. (Original) The guidewire exit tool of Claim 4, wherein the handle has a recessed center and a raised annular rim.

7. (Original) The guidewire tool of Claim 6, wherein the handle has opposing recesses on each side of the handle.

8. (Currently amended) A method of using a guidewire with a rapid exchange-type catheter having a guidewire channel and a slot in a wall along a length of the guidewire channel, comprising:

(a) loading a guidewire into [[a]] the guidewire channel of [[a]] the rapid exchange-type catheter;

(b) engaging a proximal end of the guidewire with a guidewire exit tool to lift a proximal end of the guidewire out of the guidewire channel, the guidewire exit tool including:

(i) a handle;

(ii) a pin secured to the handle, the pin having a forward facing surface that is solid in the center and tapered; and

(iii) a web that fits through a slot in a guidewire channel and secures the pin to the handle such that the pin is slidable along the guidewire channel by the handle, wherein the web being positioned laterally with respect to the long axis of the pin, the web having a forward facing surface of the web that is substantially blunt to prevent cutting the catheter; and

wherein the pin is insertable into the guidewire channel to engage the proximal end of a guidewire and lift the guidewire out of the guidewire channel

(c) wherein the guidewire exit tool is positioned so that the pin is in the guidewire channel and the web extends through the slot and the tapered forward facing surface of the pin faces the slot to lift the guidewire out of the guidewire channel through the slot.

9. Canceled.

10. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein the proximal end of the guidewire engages with the guidewire exit tool by sliding the guidewire exit tool in the guidewire channel.

11. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein the proximal end of the guidewire engages with the guidewire exit tool by sliding the guidewire against the guidewire exit tool.

12. Canceled.

13. Canceled.

14. (New) A guidewire exit tool, comprising:

- (a) a pin that is generally circular and has a tapered distal end, wherein the tapered distal end is solid in the center;
- (b) a handle; and
- (c) a web that secures the pin to the handle, the web being attached to the pin laterally with respect to the long axis of the pin.

15. (New) A method of using a guidewire with a rapid exchange-type catheter having a guidewire channel and a slot in a wall along a length of the guidewire channel, comprising:

- (a) loading a guidewire into the guidewire channel of the rapid exchange-type catheter;
- (b) engaging a proximal end of the guidewire with a guidewire exit tool, the guidewire exit tool including:

(i) a pin that is generally circular and has a tapered distal end, wherein the tapered distal end is solid in the center;

(ii) a handle; and

(iii) a web that secures the pin to the handle, the web being attached to the pin laterally with respect to the long axis of the pin; and

(c) wherein the guidewire exit tool is positioned so that the pin is in the guidewire channel and the web extends through the slot and the tapered distal end of the pin faces the slot at an angle to lift the guidewire out of the guidewire channel through the slot.